



TROJAN TODAY

YOUR SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SOURCE FOR NEWS AND EVENTS | JUNE 2020

2019-nCoV
coronavirus

SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SPECIAL REPORT



“Thank you for working with us during these difficult times. Our students, staff, and community have been nothing short of amazing... Please stay safe and continue to stay positive.”

Highland to hold virtual graduation June 20

I am excited to congratulate Highland’s Class of 2020 and pleased to announce we will be celebrating commencement at 1 p.m. June 20 in a virtual graduation ceremony. Details will be listed on the School Town of Highland website as they become available.

I want to recognize the six students who will be speaking — Abby Acres, Audrey Gregory, Victoria Guerrero, Amanda Hoffman, Joey Kerber and Olivia Smith. I want to also announce that Erin Perry and Kayleigh Ferguson will be performing. The students were selected by a committee of teachers and administrators. I can’t wait to see the final product, which will be available on YouTube after the ceremony.

I also want to tell our seniors and their families we are planning an in-person event that will take place on July 24 or Aug. 7. Please save the dates.

As we prepare to wish our graduating seniors the very best as they move forward in this time of Covid-19, we are also preparing to wish a fond farewell and best



CAPS & GOWNS: Calling it a tradition may be a stretch, but Highland’s seniors will be wearing their caps and gowns for a televised commencement just like the generations of seniors who preceded them. The difference: they were distributed during a drive-through procession. Students will still have caps and gowns to wear for pictures and during the virtual ceremony. Congratulations Class of 2020! [Ryan Harrington photo]

wishes to High School Principal Pat Weil and Southridge Elementary School Principal Roy Hufford. Both of these distinguished educators and leaders will be leaving us in July. I cannot say enough good things about these two men, who have worked tirelessly, inspiring greatness in their students. They have made Highland schools better and they will be sorely missed. I want to welcome

John Zack who has been selected to serve as principal at the high school, Amy Harrington, who has been named the new principal at Johnston and Ryan Erdelac, who is moving from Johnston to Central Office. A new principal for Southridge will be announced soon. Stay tuned.

Brian Smith
Superintendent
School Town of Highland

WEIL RETIRES FROM HIGHLAND POST



Forty years after he began a career of teaching, coaching and administrating at the high school, Principal Patrick Weil decided during the 2019 Christmas break that it was his time to retire, to graduate with the class of 2020.

Calling it his Michael Jordan shot, Weil said he is looking forward to doing something new – equally meaningful, yet different as he begins this next chapter. That the timing coincides with the Class of 2020 is a bonus.

“As this class entered life as a child of 9/11, I started the year of my first principalship reacting to the crisis that was 9/11. It was a day that changed the world,” he said. “This class is leaving as the world, again, is changing in fundamental and all too-real ways.”

ZACK NAMED HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



John Zack is a self-described Star Wars fanatic, avid runner and lifelong bibliophile.

He is also the new principal of Highland High School, already planning on how to fill the gigantic hole left by the retirement of Patrick Weil.

He will start in Highland July 1, fresh from a lengthy career as an educator and administrator at the Portage schools that began in 2001. During his tenure, Zack elevated academics as well as career and technical education. He spent time working with special needs children as well.

“I have nothing but the greatest respect for Principal Weil and what he has done for the students and teachers at Highland. I did some research on the Highland community and the schools and found they have a solid sense of home,” the married father of five said.

“My plan is to keep the highest curriculum standards established by Dr. Weil while building relationships that showcase the very best in academics.”

ERDELAC MOVES TO CENTRAL OFFICE



Johnston Elementary Principal Ryan Erdelac will be moving a mile due south July 1 as he begins a new role as Elementary Curriculum Coordinator and Human Resources Director. The first ever coordinator position

was created to serve as a hub for the four elementary school principals. “I have very much enjoyed my time as principal at Johnston. I love the kids and I love the staff, but I know I am leaving them in very good hands with Amy. I am blessed and fortunate to be moving into a position where I will still be impacting Highland’s youngest students.”

HARRINGTON TO HEAD JOHNSTON



Nearly two decades in the elementary classroom, Johnston Elementary teacher Amy Harrington has been tapped to lead the school forward as its principal.

An Indiana University-Bloomington education grad with a masters in education administration from Indiana State University, Harrington is eager to continue the legacy of innovation and education at Johnston. “I will always be a teacher at heart. In my new role, I will still be a teacher and a leader. My goal is to cultivate programs that bring out the best in our students – and our teachers.”

SCHOOL CALENDAR UPDATE

The School Town of Highland K-12 buildings, facilities and grounds remain closed for school-sponsored education, sports and other activities through June 30. All principals – elementary, middle and high schools – will be sharing information over the next few weeks about how students can return textbooks, library books and iPads as well as how to collect their belongings. Visit our website – highland.k12.in.us – for updates.